

FLATHEAD COUNTY PLANNING TASK FORCE

Thursday, May 12, 2005

Earl Bennett Building

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Members Absent</u>	<u>Others</u>
Gary Hall	Mike Meehan	Mike Miller, MDOT
Dennis Hester	Pam Kennedy	Nan Askew
Jed Fisher	Gary Marks	Russ Crowder
Charlie Johnson	Ted Rosenberry	Mayre Flowers
Johna Morrison	Richard Surynt	
Joe Russell	Peggy Goodrich	
Jim Patrick		
Velvet Phillips-Sullivan		
Bill Shaw		
Kerry Finley		
Karen Reeves		
Peggy Goodrich		
Kerry Finley		
Turner Askew		
Jerry Nix		
Diana Blend		
Mike Pence		
Don Hines		
Cris Coughlin		
Myrt Webb		
Tom Jentz		
Karen Reeves		
Jane Leivo		
Bob Horne, Jr.		

Nix called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

Agenda Approval

Nix stated that the agenda has been amended to add a public comment period and an opportunity to adopt the By-Laws. Phillips-Sullivan also asked that they discuss the grant writing position.

Patrick stated that the City of Kalispell, in cooperation with Flathead on the Move, is sponsoring the Lincoln Land Institute on June 20 and 21 at Cavanaugh's West Coast. The topic will be resolving land disputes. He invited everybody to attend this free seminar.

Hester made a motion to approve the agenda, as amended. Jentz seconded the motion. All in favor.

Minutes Approval

Russell made a motion to approve the April minutes, as presented. Leivo seconded the motion. All in favor.

Ned Cooney, Vision Statement Consultant

At the previous meeting the group brainstormed answers to the question “What should be the elements of effectively-managed growth in Flathead County?” The responses were grouped into clusters by similar intent and then, in a consensus process, clusters were given a title/name to reflect the intent behind the responses. The titles were then incorporated in to a Vision and Values/Principles statement. The eight clusters were called:

- Avoid Rural Sprawl
- Balanced & Diversified Economy
- Collaborative Planning & Decision-Making
- Delivering Effective Public Safety
- Provide & Preserve Recreation Opportunities
- Developing Superior Transportation Network
- Delivering Cost Effective Public Services
- Preserve Environmental Quality

After discussion, the following changes were made:

- 1) Avoid Rural Sprawl was changed to Promote Orderly Rural Development
- 2) “develop regional park system” was added below Provide and Preserve Recreation Opportunities
- 3) “commercial pads” was changed to “commercial pods” under Promote Orderly Rural Development

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the vision statement paragraph with a lot of emphasis on whether or not the word “managed” should be used. Some thought it sounded too regulatory. After discussion, it was agreed that it would be changed to “guided”. The vision statement is as follows:

Flathead County will continue to be a great place to live, work, and play with diverse communities, with a healthy economy, unmatched recreation, and effective infrastructure. Growth will be guided to maintain and enhance opportunities for current and future residents and visitors to experience the unique character of our area.

Adoption of By-Laws

Shaw made a motion to adopt the By-Laws, as presented. Sullivan seconded the motion. All in favor.

Update of Planning Consultant

Hines stated that consultant was given a two-page document addressing the critical issues of Flathead County, the four main issues being growth management, resource protection, quality of life, and affordable housing. The consultant will prepare a range of options and get back to the Planning Board and County Commissioners. There was a wealth of information received at those meetings. He commended B.J. for going out of his way to make these meetings happen. This is a huge challenge for the consultant; however, the consultant is looking forward to this challenge. Hines added that the Planning Board is looking forward to working with the Task Force and others to put the growth policy together.

Pence reported on a computer program that will assist in determining how impact fees can be applied. The Commissioners realize there are limited resources and impact fees are something they need to look at. This program is utilized in other communities and can be used to do assessments and evaluations to put together a proposal for impact fees and schedules. This will be done in addition to the growth policy.

Nix added that it is the goal of the consultant to come up with a plan that the entire Flathead valley can buy into. The plan won't be perfect and not everybody will get what they want. But it is the goal to end up with something that everybody can live with. They are on their way to identifying the issues, gathering a lot of background information and looking at studies that have been done. These same goals and objectives can be implemented into a policy that will be something the people of the valley can accept and embrace.

Committee Reports

Zoning Subcommittee

Reeves reported that the objective for this meeting was to define goals, issues, objectives and policies.

The goals are to 1) support the Flathead County Planning Board with a broader long term vision of zoning; 2) identify the areas within the County that should be protected for environmental sensitivity or left as open space, to look at water/sewer issues and help the county identify where the growth should occur and what densities should be allowed; 3) Phasing in zoning while identifying specific neighborhoods; and 4) Promote future development in a way that protects the environment.

Reeves also reviewed in detail the committee's objectives, what the issues are and the policy they hope to implement through this process. Reeves added that they will be meeting again on May 19 from 11:30 to 1:30.

Education Committee

Blend reported that this committee's goals are to 1) bridge the gap between the Task Force and the community; 2) Provide information to the public on where the Task Force is in the process and what direction they are going; 3) Organize and present a cohesive message from each subcommittee to the public; and 4) Engage public support for changes that will need to be made in the Growth Policy.

Discussion turned to how the information can get out to the public. Advertising in the Daily Interlake was suggested and Blend agreed to draft a report that could be published in the newspaper on a regular basis.

Parks & Rec. Committee

An assessment was done on public parks currently in existence in Flathead County. While this list does not include private parks, it does include County parks, City parks, State parks and Federal lands.

The objective was to define recreation. They need to know what recreation opportunities are currently being provided in order to determine where the needs are. Once the needs are assessed, they can move forward to looking at how to provide these services. Sullivan stated that a lot of organizations want to be involved in this process, but money is an issue.

Morrison added that the definition of recreation is extremely diversified. They have to be careful that they meet all of the needs of the county in this regard. They need to know where to place recreational facilities in relation to the growth.

Discussion turned to whether or not impact fees could be used for parkland. This would require a unanimous vote of the Commissioners and it was suggested that a meeting be scheduled with the Commissioners to educate them on how important parks and recreation is to the valley.

Morrison added that there is an opportunity, through the subdivision regulations, to obtain cash in lieu of parkland. This is also something that should be looked into to determine whether or not the county chooses the land or takes the cash.

Sewer, Water and Stormwater Committee

This report was tabled until the next meeting.

Public Comment Period

Flowers stated that she attended several of the consultant meetings and there were some great sessions the last few days. She is looking forward to more positive meetings.

Russ Crowder made a comment regarding impact fees. He stated that in 1994 the Flathead Business and Industry did a study on impact fees. They found that for every \$1,000 increase in housing costs, 40,000 families were priced out of having a home. Based on these statistics, 20% of Flathead County would be priced out of the housing market. Public policies and impact fees would affect the lives of a lot of people. This Task Force needs to understand the entire ramifications of impact fees and the affect on families not being able to purchase a home.

Crowder added that the mission statement should also have something in there about protecting the rights of property owners.

Don Hines stated that the Planning Board will be having Growth Policy workshops in the Commissioners meeting room on Mondays at 6:00 p.m. They have sent a request to the planning staff to send a letter to all boards, all staff, all departments and agencies to provide information.

Hines added that there is a workshop on June 3 in Missoula aimed at planners and planning board members. This is a post-legislative session to discuss all bills that were recently passed in the session. Hines added that he would like to meet with other communities to see what is going on in those areas. Nix stated that he would like to see notice of this meeting sent to all Planning Board members and Task Force members.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.